

~~E
185
.86
H 62~~

FLS
2015
012429

BROWN JACKETS

BY
JANE SCREVEN HEYWARD



THE STATE COMPANY
COLUMBIA, S. C.



Class E185

Book .86

Copyright N^o H62

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.



JANE SCREVEN HEYWARD

BROWN JACKETS

BY

game

JANE SCREVEN HEYWARD

COLUMBIA, S. C.
THE STATE COMPANY
1923

E 185
.86
.H62

COPYRIGHT, 1923,
BY THE STATE COMPANY



23-16896

NOV -5 '23

© CIA 760728

no 1

TO
AMBROSE E. GONZALES
"THE PATHFINDER"

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD.

These sketches of the Gullah Negro, a number of which have been given publicly in my readings, are not so much pieces of my own creative writing as they are a collaboration written out of the experiences of many friends, white and black. They carry no propaganda, unless it be the unconscious desire to present a sincere impression of the attitude existing between the two races in the Carolina Low Country.

The dialect varies slightly in several of these sketches. This is a characteristic that the native Carolinian will recognize, that of the urban negro being more easily understood than the thick "Gullah" of the rural black.

Grateful acknowledgment is made for the services of friends who have contributed material that has gone into these sketches; and to Ambrose E. Gonzales for the great service he has rendered in making the "Gullah" dialect accessible for the purposes of literature.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Priestess of the Suds	9
Ole Miss	12
The Chicken Mother	17
A Mighty Liar	21
The Rolling Eye	25
In the Making	32
Marianne's Toe	32
Lowena Johnson's Funeral	38
Daddy Sanders in Defence of Slavery	43
Gunnerman Sho Kin Lie	50
Pastor Caesar Gilyad Discourses of the Here- after	56
Phineas Connors—Servant	61

A PRIESTESS OF THE SUDS

With our nervous, quick-footed, energetic Maria, black of skin and white of heart, Monday (wash day) was only one degree less sacred than Sunday. Perhaps it was that having, in a manner, rested on Sunday, the stored-up energy was obliged to have an outlet, and we knew by experience that the early dawn would find her, and Elijah, her small ward and factotum, creeping about the house, upstairs and downstairs, like Gargantuan mice scurrying around, with the desire of accomplishment strong within Maria, and the fear of her tongue and ready hand a spur to the natural indolence of a small negro boy.

Nothing had ever been specifically said about our having breakfast at an earlier hour than usual on Mondays, but after listening to the scurrying feet from the daylight hour, the family found it convenient and expedient to assemble in the breakfast room at least a half-hour in advance of the usual time, and such was the atmosphere of hurry created by Maria, that the meal was then partaken of at a rate of speed by which an observer would have imagined the family in haste to catch an early train.

Maria and Elijah reminded one of nothing as much (after the gigantic mice simile) as a small coach being continually pushed up a mountain by a very powerful and determined steam engine.

One Monday morning, when our Goddess of Suds and Elijah had been acting the engine-and-coach role to unusual perfection, the scurrying feet of Elijah stopped by the way when sent on an errand pertaining to the sacred rite of clothes-washing. Then the "engine" puffed more steam and summoning the "coach" from behind the wash-house, the modern Temple of Suds, where he had taken refuge to draw a long breath, I heard her say.

"Boy, come yah! Wa's smatter? Yo' sick, enty? I t'ink 'e time fo' dat medicine I promise yo'. Yo' foot so slow I cay'n see um de mobe. Mus' be yo' t'ink yo' on de chain-gang and yo' foot tie togedder wid chain. Dats we'h I gwine put you durecly, yo' slow, creepin' t'ing! Yo' Mammy mus' be hab de creepin' sickness sure fo' yo' bo'n. Doa' lemme see yo' stop fo' tin'k pun nuttin'. Enty yo' know slow walkin' make quick lashin'?" "Yass Ma'am" imper-turbably answered the boy, but he thought it best to speed up again, and when I looked out shortly after I beheld Maria, apparently having

reached her goal, perfectly happy, and seeming, as with a long stick she stirred the clothes in the large black pot, like a witch, who by her incantations over it, hoped to transform the soiled linen into the sweet-scented, smoothly ironed clothes, filling the willow basket, which with much pomp and pride would be borne into the house later by this Priestess of the Suds and her small black acolyte, Elijah, who although bearing the name of a prophet, distinctly was here to fulfil and *not to prophesy*.

OLE MISS

It was a lovely morning in early Spring, and an air of unusual excitement pervaded the old Plantation. The servants went hurrying around as though anxious to complete their usual tasks and all were smiling.

“Young Maussa” had gone to Charleston, and when he returned he would bring with him a bride, a lady who none of them had ever seen, but who would, in time, rule over their destinies. And now the day for their arrival had come, and the servants would soon be drawn up in line to be introduced, and to make their curtsies to the new young Miss.

At the head of the line stood Susannah, a comely and intelligent young woman who had been selected for these qualities to act as maid to her mistress. The hour so long anticipated had arrived, and the carriage could be seen approaching drawn by the finest pair of horses the plantation could boast.

Looking from the window beamed the smiling face of the bride, and when the carriage stopped at the entrance to the hall, the servants all pressed forward, eager each one to be the

first to shake the hand of "Miss" and "Maussa" and extend their congratulations.

The wording of these congratulations often brought a blush to the face of the lady, for such was the style of them: "Long life, an' heap o' chillun, Missis," "Long life, and every year a gal or a boy, Maussa."

Susannah was presented to her young "Miss" and after curtseying low she said "My Missis, I is yo' sarbent, mam, and I gwine tek cah o' yo' long as I lib in dis wull, Missis."

And so she did. When the wished-for babies arrived, Susannah was given the care of them and another woman was appointed maid, but always was Susannah in the nursery and many a time did she help her mistress in her fight against croup, measles, or some other dreaded ill of the baby days of her young charges. Susannah never forgot her promise to "tek cah ob young Missis."

When the dreary days of the Civil War came on and the Yankees marched against the house, and "Young Miss," who was the only protector left on the Plantation, dressed herself and went down in the darkness of early dawn, herself to speak to the Captain and demand protection for the house, where were only defenceless women

and children, Susannah, fearing that her precious charge, the youngest baby, would be injured by the shot penetrating to the nursery, picked up the infant, and rushed from the house, determined to protect it with her life.

Then after the war, and amidst all the desolation which followed in its wake, Susannah's faithfulness was like a rock to be leant upon and she and her "Miss" were never parted either by Fate or circumstance.

Years sped on and "Young Miss" had become "Ole Miss." The baby of the baby with whom Susannah had fled from the besieged house, was a young lady, and Susannah was the beloved "Mauma" of all the generations whom she had spent the years of her life in nursing and in protecting from threatened ills.

It was an unusually cold winter in the South, and Susannah had for weeks been confined to her bed with a violent attack of rheumatism. At the same time the shadows were lengthening for "Ole Miss." Susannah lived in the house which had always been hers on the plantation, and each morning when she was visited by the family from the "Big House," she sent word to tell "Ole Miss," "De rheumatiz am got me, an' am hollen me in dis bed, but I gwine git ober

um, an' come een de house fo' shum berry soon now. Tell Miss fo' keep up he h'aa't."

One night when ice and snow were everywhere, the final summons came for "Ole Miss," and yet she could not go, continually she cried "Susannah, Susannah, come here," and again "Where is Susannah?"

And what answer could they who loved her so well give her? Finally two young girls of the house determined that Grandmother should have her dying wish gratified, and out of the house they went, plunging into the drifts of snow and carrying warm blankets and many wraps.

They knocked at Susannah's door, and cried "Mauma, we have come for you; Grannie wants you. She is going away and she can't go until you come. Do you think if we carry you in our arms you can go?"

"Come een, chile, come on een. I gwine fo' see my ole' Miss. Susannah gwine be dere fo' see 'e Missis; I done promise um dat; him can't go ober Jordan widdout I dedday."

So Susannah was lifted out of bed and wrapped in many blankets and taken into the house in the arms of the two devoted girls. When they reached "Grandmother's" room, they unwrapped

the worn old form and carried her close to the bed, where Grandmother lay calling, calling ever "Where is Susannah?"

Susannah caught the thin restless white hands in both of hers and carried them to her lips. "My Missis, my Missis" she said, "Yah I is, yah I is, yo' Susannah. I cum fo' go wid yo'. Tek me, Missis, tek me 'long, de water ain' gwine col' ef we go een um tergedder."

And the water was not cold, for the two friends of almost a lifetime went in together.

And when "Ole Miss" was laid away for her last sleep, Susannah was put to rest at her feet.



THE CHICKEN MOTHER

THE CHICKEN MOTHER

Maria wanted some chickens to raise. I had been buying a few every week from my mountain neighbors, to supply the table, but what my country-raised cook, Maria, desired with all her heart, was a fowl-house and in it chickens, scratching and clucking, that she could feed and water, and perhaps fatten for the table.

One day she came to me and made her yearning known.

“Mis’ Heyward, wah mek yo’ ain’ buy heap o’ chicken an’ lemme raise um? Ef yo’ gimme some dem plank and a nail or two, I kin mek a fowl-house fo’ keep um een. Mis’ Heyward, ent’ yo’ know I is a chicken mudder, mam? An’ I wan’ some unner my han’.”

After this I realized the necessity of a chicken family in Maria’s scheme of happiness, and so instituted a series of inquiries to every mountaineer I came in contact with. Always I met with the same affirmative answer “Yes, I got chickens,” but my perfectly natural inquiry as to the price seemed to place an insurmountable stumbling block in the path of our negotiations. The price, or even the approximate price, was never known and the chickens failed to appear.

One day Maria's desire for chickens to cluck and scratch around the yard overcame her culinary ambitions, and realizing that all collections must have a beginning somewhere, she came to me saying:

"Mis' Heyward, is yo' appetite open fo' chicken terday?" I knew that there was only one fowl available, and though my appetite was decidedly "open," I said, "Do you want to keep that *one*, Maria?"

Her face lighted up, and she said, "Yes, Mam, ef yo' kin sparum."

I could not be so hard-hearted as to refuse, and after a search of my mind, compromised with my "open appetite" on something from a can, which I could substitute for the sake of the potential brood of chickens. Then came Sunday, which was always "chicken day" with us. Again I practiced self-denial and added the two sabbatical chickens to Maria's original "ewe lamb."

Monday was washday, day of sacred rites, of steaming wash-pot and sudsy odors, but on this special Monday there was an added *something* about Maria's usual washday excitement. She had become a real chicken mother, and had a brood under her watchful care. The clothes, in

a miraculously short time, were swinging briskly from the line, and she rushed to me, stammering with excitement, to say, "Please, Mam, gimme de planks now, so I kin mek de fowl-house."

My one and only "He," seeing that it was impossible to stem the tide of Maria's eagerness, and entertaining grave doubts as to the architecture of the edifice she would erect, decided to suspend work upon a poem he was building, and turn his ready hand to work upon the structure. So Maria, her small boy Elijah, and the Poet, (the entire active force of the establishment) went into construction work.

The hands of the chicken mother were tremulous with eagerness, but not to such an extent that their efficiency was lost, and when the abode was completed, and the proud moment arrived when three chickens were moved in, then and then only, was her nervous tension relaxed and a smile of satisfied motherhood spread over the now contented black face.

Being notified of the building's completion by the cessation of hammering, I called to ask her how they liked their new home, and her voice conveyed more than her words, in the complete satisfaction of her answer, "'e scratchin'."

And now my Poet-Builder advises that I close and make fast the door of my "appetite for chicken" until he can persuade some of the reluctant mountaineers to name a chicken's price, for never, never could we be so cruel as to dash away the cup of satisfaction so happily raised to the lips of the gratified "Chicken Mother."

A MIGHTY LIAR

The weather was bitterly cold, and I was having trouble in my rice fields, some repair work had to be done as soon as the tide went out, and the gang of negro workers who were awaiting this time, sat around a blazing fire and talked.

In order to keep them warm I had brought with me to the scene of their labors a bountiful supply of Carolina Dispensary corn whiskey, and this I distributed freely among them. Then I established myself at a short distance near a small fire of my own, but within earshot of their talk.

Many were the stories they told, and all of them would bear repetition, but I have chosen the most typical of the "gunner man" tales which reached my ear on that frosty afternoon.

"Bra Moses, wah dat yo' binna tell we de tudder day 'bout Cuh Jo? Le's we yeddy dem again, I forgit wah unner binna talk, dat time. Wah'e is yo' fo' say?"

Thus urged Bra Moses commenced.

"'E is disaway, Cuh Jo' wife been sick een 'e bed, Cuh Jo gone terrum, an' 'e stan' by 'e bed de look 'pun um de lay deh, an' he sorry ferrum,

an' 'e say 'Gal, wah 'e is yo' wan' fo' eat? I gwine git um fo' yo'.' ”

“ 'E wife tell um fo' fetch a deer, a wil' tu'kry, a honeys, en a fish, den 'e gwinea eat um, an' 'e t'ink say he gwinea git well.”

“Cuh Jo tek 'e gun een 'e han' an' 'e gone ter de 'ood.”

“Him see a wil' tu'kry settin' 'pun a limb ob a tree, an' underneet de same tree 'e see a deer de eat grass, he ain' know waffer do dat time, 'e wan' bot' de deer an' also de tu'krys wah 'e wife binna as' him fo' git ferrum.”

“He mek up 'e min' fo' try git de tu'krys; an' please God! w'en him shoot de tu'kry de limb binna rotten, an' de tu'kry, an' de limb bot' ob dem is fall down 'pun top de deer, an' him an' de tu'krys all two dead same time weh dey is.”

“Cuh Jo haffer cross a water een de road fo' git ter de tree, an' him binner hab on dem hip boot, de water so high een de road 'e splash een Cuh Jo boot, an' him beggin fo' feel sometin' de move roun' een 'e boot leg. W'en 'e stop fo' look 'pun um 'e see 'e is de fay fish wah git een 'e boot leg.

“Cuh Jo glad fummek so. Him know 'e wife gwinea glad, den he t'ink 'pun dem honeys him wife baig um fo' fetch um, an' he hope w'en

him see de fish an' de tu'krys, an' de deer he ain' gwinea 'member 'bout de honeys wah he binna as' um fo' git."

A chorus from the group around the fire.

"Da's so, please God, him binna git de wen'son, him binna git de tu'krys, him binna contribe fo' git de fishes eben, but 'e cayn git de honeys w'en 'e ain' got no bees. Wah him do 'bout dat, Bra Moses? Wah him is gwine to do 'bout dat?"

"Wah unner t'ink 'e do?" answered this teller of wonderful deeds. "Unner t'ink say 'e ain' git de honeys enty? All right den, you is t'ink wrong, 'e is git um disaway. Him binna lif' up de rotten branch from off de deer fo' t'row um way, an' him binna yeddy a noise een de branch secca bee de buzz, an' him ain' rekonize wah him is, so him is pull de top ba'ak off de branch, an', please God, de honeys dey on de eenside ob de branch, an' de bee wah is mek de honeys is de buzz roun' um; de bee so sma'at 'e done fin' de hollow een de branch fo' mek 'e hide een, an' da's wah mek so Cuh Jo is manage fo' git de honeys 'pun top all dem turrer t'ing fo' pledger 'e 'oman wah deh home sick een 'e bed."

"W'en Cuh Jo' wife shum comin' 'e say 'Tek 'way all dem t'ing wah yo' is got. I ain' want

nuttin fo' eat but de grool wah mek outer de hom'ny."

"Shugh! 'oman too contrady, and w'en 'e sick 'e de debbil 'pun top contrady."

THE ROLLING EYE

An experiment? Yes. But when I had been told that my only hope of ultimately getting back to work was to completely give up for the present, and to go into the country, alone—or alone save for someone to do the necessary work to provide me with sufficient nourishing food to sustain life—

“A hammock on the porch, and nothing, absolutely nothing to do or to think about” was what the doctor said.

As a means of having the necessary work accomplished, I chose Malvina, not because she was superior to the other possibilities, but because she was the only one. Honesty and a willingness to work were her prime recommendations, but counterbalancing these was her most erratic temper. I knew that at the close of each day during which nothing had happened to arouse her wrath, I would offer a special prayer of thanksgiving.

Attached to Malvina, not by birth but by the rite of solemn adoption, was a most ingratiating small black nephew, who either delighted us with his broad smile and wonderful consideration for the comfort of others, or enraged by

his untruthfulness or thieving propensities. He was like a wasp to sting Malvina into rage, a veritable old man of the woods, for she had promised a dying sister to care for the boy, and was sure should she throw him off or put him in the often-threatened reformatory, she would be forever an outcast among those who knew of her promise.

When Malvina became ill a few days before the time of our expected departure, she burst into tears at the prospect of not being able to go with me into the country, and in answer to her husband's remark "Wah mek yo' cry? Yo' de fus' colored pusson I ebber see de cry fo' go wid w'ite people," she said, "Yo' ain' *know my w'ite people, man.*"

She recovered by force of her will, not to be left behind, and the party soon were settled in the mountain home and the regular daily life prescribed by the doctor was taken up.

Except for Malvina's uncertain temper when stung into action by this wasp, all went well. I lay in my hammock on the porch and did not even think, except when one or the other of the black noses in the establishment would be flattened against the wire screen of the porch door, and I would be asked, "Missis, w'at is yo' pled-

ger fo' dinner ter day?" or "Yo' gwine gimme de money fo' git de butter?"

When unstung by the wasp, Malvina's attentions to me were quite touching, and except for those intervals when her temper ran riot, she kept the porch beautiful with flowers, and once, when she returned after the absence of an hour, she brought me a lovely downy pink cactus bloom saying, "Dis so putty, I fetch um fo' yo' ter play wid." When her humor was extraordinarily fine, whether it was desired by me or not, she would appear with a hot water bag, for the benefit of—she knew not what—but never did I fail to thank her enthusiastically and to place it *somewhere*.

When angered by the wasp beyond endurance, she usually absented herself entirely from my presence. On these occasions the offender became the bearer of my tray, while I held my breath, hoping for the crisis to pass and peace to be restored. Sometimes when I was least pleased with the boy, he would ingratiatingly offer me some unusual service such as "Yo' wan' me fo' t'red needle fo' yo'?" and smiling until every strong white tooth in his mouth showed, he was the living example of black, good-natured

perfection, and brought a smile to my heart and lips, almost against my will.

One day the largest of the black noses flattened itself to excess against the screen door, and I saw with a sinking heart that Malvina was again encompassed by what she termed her "crazy fits of misery." The air surrounding her seemed as dark as the black face with its flattened nose.

"I gotta go home," she commenced, "Dis yah boy done set me crazy—'e binna *tief*, Missis, 'e binna *tief*, 'e binna *tief*, Mam, an' all my people is binna 'spectable, none dem ebber been een pententry, 'cep one brudder, him binna put up fo' cut man t'roat—de man is borrow ten cent from um, and ain' gee um back w'en 'e deh as' um ferrum. My brudder been one clear roll-eye-nigger, an' ef roll-eye-nigger git bex, he gwine find knife somehownudder and caa'be up somebody. Ef 'e cay'n caa'be up de one wah do um wrong, den 'e gwine caa'be up de nex' pusson wah 'e see. Better lemme go, Missis."

I was already trembling with the futile terror of one afflicted with "nerves," but my horror was increased by the fact which then for the first time burst upon my consciousness, that Malvina's eye—her left eye—*rolled*, and seemed

under excitement almost to burst from its socket. Was I to be the sacrifice to the roll-eye family madness? Here I was, alone except for the recalcitrant wasp and his enraged "roll-eye" Auntie. Could I get to the kitchen and conceal from her the vicious looking bread-knife, before her rage should reach the cutting point? No, not without exciting her suspicions. And the wasp? Were those white teeth doomed to shine no more between his smiling lips?

I said all I could to quiet Malvina, and administered to her as well as to myself, a nerve-tonic which I kept always on hand.

"Yes, we will all go" I said, "but not today." I would cheerfully have given at that time, half of my small income, or all, for one of Malvina's smiles, but the time was not propitious for the purchase of such. She kept out of my sight, and the wasp, looking somewhat subdued but still smiling, brought my supper to the porch. I looked at his shiny black skin and wondered if that portion around his neck was doomed to wear a crimson collar before morning. "Crazy fit of misery" I said to myself, "Crazy fit of misery; it's nothing to the crazy fit of misery *I* have right *now*, even though I am not a 'roll-eye nigger,' but just a poor, wretched person who

fears to be the next sacrifice to the rage of one who is."

On going to bed that night, I would assuredly have locked my door, but I found the key had disappeared, so wishing Malvina a trembling but conciliatory "good night," I turned in. It was long before I could get to sleep, as my ice-cold feet missed their accustomed hot water bag, which had been forgotten in the unusual and unhealthy excitement which prevailed.

Early, very early next morning, I heard the handle of my door turned; it was the sound which subconsciously my mind had all night been expecting and dreading to hear. My hour had come, but it occurred to me that even a "roll-eye nigger" might hesitate to carve up a lady she loved, in her sleep. So I assumed the calm slumber of an innocent child. Would Malvina, the roll-eyed, subject to her crazy fit of misery, not be turned from her purpose when she looked upon the face she loved, in sleep?

Assuming the appearance of abandon which I was far from feeling, I lay there awaiting what would happen. I heard the footsteps creeping toward the bed; nearer they came. Should I uncloset my eyes the least little bit to peep out

and see, I would break the illusion of peaceful slumber I had striven to create.

Now she was at the bed, fumbling with the bedclothes. Perhaps not my throat to be cut this time, but my legs to be cut off. How terrible! What? No? Oh, the joy—Malvina had lifted the bedclothes gently at the foot of the bed so as not to awaken me, and had quietly slipped my much-needed hot water bag into its accustomed place at my frozen extremities.

Surreptitiously I lifted very slightly, one eyelid just enough to glimpse her face, and oh, how I loved the calm quiet of her facial expression and of the eyes which had ceased to “roll.” The “crazy fit of misery” had passed, but the report which my doctor received that week was not encouraging: “Nervous condition unsettled; insomnia again rules the night.”

IN THE MAKING

In the remote parts of the country, and in the isolated Sea Islands of South Carolina, the negroes of this day still retain much of their faithfulness to their employers, and are unsophisticated and simple in their manner of thought.

When these migrate to the cities they make valuable servants because they have a real affection toward those for whom they work, and it is by their possession of this quality that they compensate for the time and patience which must be expended in teaching them the complicated ways of a city household.

Their ignorance of urban matters is sometimes most surprising.

One of these simple darkeys obtained employment with me, and I painstakingly explained to her my name, also instructed her how she should act when answering a call at the street door.

This was the disappointing result:

A knock at my door—"Come in, Maria."

"W'ite Folks, dere's a 'oman at deh doa', 'e say 'e wan' see yo'."

I asked for the "'oman's" name. Much surprised that I should expect such information from her, Maria answered:

"I ain' know 'e name, I ain' nebber shum befo', how I gwine know 'e name?"

"Howsomeebber, W'ite Folks, him binna say somet'in' 'bout a Heywards, mebbe da' 'e name, I ain' know."

I now realized that Maria had forgotten my name, and was addressing me as "W'ite Folks." This knowledge on my part called for more lessons in the gentle art of deportment.

After a while my confidence in Maria's honesty was so firmly established that I left home for several months trusting her to take charge of kitchen and pantry, during my absence.

On my return after greetings had been exchanged I noticed in her hands a newspaper package, which she bashfully held towards me. I thought it some sort of a coming home present, and was preparing to enthuse over it when she said:

"Dis am yo' picter, Missis, w'en you gone 'way I binna tek um home wid me, so I hab a chance fo' look 'pun yo' face w'en yo' ain' yeh fo' me look 'pun yo' yossself. Now you is come back,

an' I kin see yo', so I is bring um back, Missis, I ain' gwintea teef um."

I was much touched by this mark of Maria's affection.

Shortly before Christmas I called her to me saying, "Maria, what do you want for Christmas?"

"Me wan' apun," was her answer.

"All right, you shall have it," I said. "I will tell Santa Claus to bring it for you."

Next morning early, without pausing to knock at my door, she burst into my bed-room, trembling with excitement, and said:

"Miss Heyward, how yer—how yer—like a little basket fo' yo' C'rismus?"

I said, "Maria, that would be lovely, but how do you think I could get it?"

She answered, "I gwinea, I gwinea ax Santy Clua' fetch um fo' you."

Next day when she appeared with the basket carefully done up in newspaper she handed it to me, and announced:

"'E ain' see C'rismus yet, but I buy um an' I cayn wait."

MARIANNE'S TOE.

Sunday afternoon in the Quarters. How wonderfully clean were the little yards around the small wooden houses. On the step of each house sat its owners, basking in the warm sunshine and awaiting the regular Sunday afternoon friendly call from "Maussa and Miss."

From a long way off they could be seen approaching, arm in arm, and stopping as they came at each cabin door, to chat, and either rejoice or sorrow with its occupants on the happenings of the week, the tale of which was poured into their sympathetic ears.

Maum Marianne had substituted for "Maussa's Mauma" once, when she had been ill, and so she considered herself a sort of vicarious Mauma to her Maussa, and so demanded special attention from him on these delightful Sunday afternoon calls.

"Well, Maum Marianne," he called cheerfully as he approached her domain, "how are you this afternoon?"

Her answer was discouraging. "Ki, Maussa, how yo' kin as' me how I is? Enty yo' know I is most crazy wid my foot? Ebry Sunday I is tell yo' he hu't me; he ain' git no better."

“Maussa” having prescribed frequently for the foot without apparently helping it at all, first looked very sympathetic, then seeing that was not the medicine required, he tried jollyng the old woman a little, and said:

“Upon my soul, Marianne, I am afraid you will have to have that toe chopped off; I don’t know what to do for it.” With a few more joking words, which actually produced a laugh from the sufferer, he moved on and he and “Miss” proceeded on their way with their social calls in the Quarters.

Next morning when Maum Bina, the sick nurse, came in to “Miss” as usual, with her report of the sick on the place, she asked for some cotton and turpentine “fo’ fix up Marianne toe.” “Miss” expressed surprise at this, and asked for particulars concerning the troublesome member. She was horrified to hear from Maum Bina:

“How, Miss, yo’ ain’ know Maussa been tell she fer chop um off? Da’ wah him tell me. Him call me an ax me fo’ call Br’er Lisha, and ax him to fetch he chisel from ’e ca’penter shop, and come chop off ’e toe, like Maussa tell she fo’ do. When Br’er Lisha come, ’e tell um Maussa say he mus’ chop off he toe w’ hu’t um, and him put ’e foot up on de ca’penter bench and Br’er Lisha

tek he chisel an' he put um on 'e toe, en he tek 'e hatchet, an' he hit 'e chisel widum, an' de toe is fly off, 'tell he loss in de bush. Cu Marianne been a stan' up but atter dat, him haffer set down and I fetch um some water. 'E say 'e all right ter day, an' he glad he toe done chop off, but 'e t'ink I better tie up de place weh he been, wid tupentine."

"Maussa" was much concerned when he heard that his joking had been taken seriously, but as Marianne suffered no ill consequences from Br'er Lisha's crude surgery and was much happier without the offending member than she had been with it, all ended well.

LOWENA JOHNSON'S FUNERAL

Lowena Johnson, kind, patient, silent Lowena, had scraped her biscuit board for the last time; for the last time had she delighted our palates with her breakfast waffles and cheered our inner man with her delicious, hot, steaming okra soup, and now our kitchen seemed like a desert-wild to the family, who had depended on our faithful cook for many a long year. Now "Loweny" had gone never to return, and we had been notified by her family of her sudden death, and had also been asked to attend the funeral which would take place at the church.

As Lowena was advanced in years, we thought a sheaf of wheat was an appropriate floral offering, and so ordered it from the florist. It had been sent with our cards, and a sentiment of deep regret.

At the appointed hour we arrived at the church and were shown by the sexton to conspicuous seats near where the casket would rest.

We knew that the departed had been a faithful member of her church Society, for often we had been obliged to forage for dinner, while she was attending the funeral of one or another of her "Class." And now they reciprocated by at-

tending in large and mournfully garbed numbers.

They followed the casket into the church in two long, black lines. Finally, members of the family came in and took their places near the casket. With wonderful consideration, when Lowena's sister, through her long black veil espied us sitting there, she advanced from her position, and searching among the paper flowers which covered the casket, she found what she was looking for—*our* sheaf of wheat—and stood it up stiffly on end, so that we, its donors, could see for *ourselves* that it was not only *fully* appreciated but was being given the place of honor. We esteemed highly this attention.

The service started with the singing of a *doleful* hymn and at its close there were many moans and sounds of grief from the "Class." The minister announced in tones of unerring certainty that when the angel of Death had knocked at Sister Lowena's door at *six-fifteen* the night before, he had found her *ready* and *waiting* for the summons. From the Society cries of "Yes, Lord! Das de trut' Lord, Yes, Lord!"

After many long prayers came the sermon and its compliments to her would, I am sure, have surprised patient, quiet Lowena. After many

remarks about the holiness of her life, the preacher concluded by saying:

“W’en yo’ alls is read de *histry* book, dis is wah yo’ gwine *see* dere, ‘Dere is dis t’ree great ’oman in de worl’ from de *time* ’e is beggin, one is Queen Isabella, one is Queen Victoria, an’ one is Lowena Johnson!’ Yes, I say, Bredderin, yo’ unnerstan’ me *right*, one is *Lowena Johnson*.’ And he continued:

“Him wah is now lyin’ befo’ yo’ ’een de col’ clay.” From the “Class,” “Yes, Lord, Yes, Mass’ Jedus, een de col’ clay,” then sobs and groans.

Having paused to give opportunity for these expressions of grief, the pastor continued. “De *fus*’ one wah I talk ’bout, Queen Isabella,— him been sell he breas’ pin an’ gee de money to Christopher Columbus, an’ also he is sell he yerring, an’ he gee *dat* money ter Christopher Columbus, an’ w’en he dollar git ’nough, him come in de yea’ 1914, an’ him been discober at *dat time* de cuntinent ob Sout’ America, so das how de Queen Isabella is come ter be berry highly t’ought ob, but not mo’ so dan our sister lyin’ een de col’ clay. I is yeddy him v’ice de call back now ter yo’ all—him foot is in de ribber Jordan, an’ he is say ‘Good bye, Sisters an’ Goodbye, Bredders.’ Him is wabe ’e han! I shum; an’ him is dress

in de p'yo w'ite. Him face is shine secca de angel face." Cries of "Good Bye" are heard here.

"De nex' one ob dem great 'oman wah I is menshun, him is Queen Victory, an' him *mone* all 'e life fo' 'e husbin. An' doa a heap o' man is cote him, he ain' neber marry none dem. An' him sit 'pun de t'rone, an' hab henkercher to 'e eye, an' him say 'e rudder be widder 'oman dan ter marry wid anudder mans. Das wah mek him great! Enty I tell unner him great?

"Den las'ly I is come ter de t'ird great 'oman in de hist'ry book, an' him is lyin' befo' unner now een de col' clay; him is binna name Lowena Johnson, but he is git a new name wah 'e gone. But een de hist'ry book *das* wah dey is name him. An' him binna great as de turrer *two* queen een he *own* nationality."

Having gotten out this very large and unusual word, the pastor sank into his chair to note the effect of it upon the mourning congregation.

Cries rent the air, and among them could be distinguished the words "Nationality!" "Yes, my Lord, Nationality," "'e own Nationality." "Good bye, Lowena, Good bye Lowena—Good bye, Sister."

As the service had already lasted for an hour and three-quarters, we slipped out during the excitement over the new word. Walking down the street, we still heard the mournful sound, as the "Class" continued to call their "good byes" to their former faithful member.

There was so much of the dramatic about the funeral that we realized how impossible it would *ever* be to keep one's cook in the kitchen when the call had come to attend the obsequies of one of her "Class."

DADDY SANDERS IN DEFENCE OF SLAVERY

For days I had been endeavoring to secure the services of a really good house cleaner; winter was approaching, and carpet-laying time was upon me. Almost it seemed in response to my very earnest desire, there came a timid ring at the door bell, and Annie, my newly acquired servant girl, ushered into my presence a typical old "before the war" negro man.

He was almost a giant in size, and his complexion was of a thoroughly respectable coal black hue. After bowing low, the salutation being augmented by a scraping of the old man's feet, he made his business known.

"Miss," he said, "I is a house cleaner by per-fession, and de lady wah engage me ter wuk ferrum ter day, he ain' see he way clear fo'use me, so, my Missis, I dis been tek a chance an' ring yo' doa bell, t'inkin' you might be in need ob somet'in' in my line, wah-by I kin keep busy t'rou' de day."

On inquiring his name, I received the answer: "I is name Sanders, my Missis, mam; dis Sanders."

The face which I looked into was so honest that it was with difficulty I could make up my mind to ask for his references, but so often had this reluctance gotten me into trouble, that I continued, addressing him by the title I had learned to use to all old men on the plantation. "Daddy Sanders" I asked, "Have you any recommendation? Something to tell me you can do your work well?"

It was with a sense of relief that I saw his feelings were not hurt as he answered, "Das right, my Missis, yo' is pufkly right, but I is sorry mam, dat I ain' got no writin wid me ter day; I lef um ter my house coz I ain' t'ink I gwine hab use ferrum, Mam, but my Missis, I got um een my mout'. I is of'en substitute fer Mayor Rab'nel, mam, de one wah lib on Legare Street. When him house cleaner is sick, mam, he does of'en sen' me terrum fer do he wuk. Is you 'quainton wid he, my Missis?"

I answered that while not personally acquainted with the distinguished gentleman, I often visited my relatives living near him. The old man bowed low in recognition of the fact, and said, "I ain' doubt it, my Missis, I ain' doubt it atall mam. De minute I set my eye on yo' face I know you is related on Legare Street."

After this verbal exchange of certified respectability, I engaged Daddy Sanders for a day's work as a house cleaner and carpet-layer. With the ease and understanding of a well-trained servant of the old school, he commenced his task and feeling that he needed no supervision, I absented myself for several hours. Finally, thinking it wise to investigate conditions, I returned to the room. The old man turned to me from his position on the floor, and to my surprise, asked, "My Missis, weh you is git dat gal, mam; de one dat is wuk fer you?"

I answered his inquiry by saying, "She came in answer to an advertisement I put in the paper last week, and as she was well recommended I engaged her; she does her work very well."

"But, my Missis, she is a fool, mam," I was startled to hear Daddy Sanders say. "Him is a plum fool, mam, ('scuse de wud); him come in yah, an' widdout my say nuttin terrum, him sta't de conbersation, an' him say dis ter me:

"'Ole man, you is been in slabery time, enty?' I answered um 'Yes, dat I is glad fer say I yiz, fer ef I ain' been in slabery time, I ain' been able fer earn a hones' libbin' ter day. Dat I is able ter now on account de trainin' my ole miss done gee me.' Den him laugh, kine ob sassy like, an'

him say, 'Lord, me glad me ain' been yere in dem days, w'en ef yo' ain' do wah dey tell yo' fer do, you is git lash.'

"Missis, he mek me so bex I say 'Gal, ain' yo' ma an' yo' pa lash yo' w'en dey git ready?' Him say 'Yes, 'e is.' I say, 'Dem is lash yo' w'en dem git bex wid yo', enty? In de ole time w'en yo' maussa hab you lash, 'e is because unner neglec' fer do wah him tell you fer do. Look'pun me, gal! I git a heap ob lash, coz mek I ain' scrub out de pantry an' de kitchen ebry mornin', come fibe o'clock. Da wah my Missis 'struct me fer do, so he dry by de time de cook got fer git de breakfus ready fer de w'ite people eat. W'en I sit up late an' I sleepy, I ain' do um, den I is get de lash, but Gal, dat is de trainin', an' dey is got a puffick right fer gee um ter me. Maussa him ain' hab we lash w'en him bex wid we, but yo' Pa and yo' Ma is do dat-a-way.'

"De gal ain' say nuttin ter dat, an' I t'ink say him onnerstan' so I settle myself back ter do my wuk, but atter w'ile him return and him crack de doa, and him say, 'I dunkah, I glad I is born free.'

"'E so fool, Missis, I ain' know waffer tell um; I ain' know wah mek 'e can't lemme 'lone,

but I wan' git on wid my wukso dat bein' de case, I is reason wid um once mo'. I say, 'Gal, w'en yo' sick ain' yo' ma and yo' pa got fer sen' fer de doctah, and ain' dem got fer pay de doctah fer ebry wud him say? An' w'en de winter wedder come and yo' got to hab warm close, ain' yo' pa and yo' ma got fer buy um fer yo'? An' w'en yo' teet' got fer pull out, ain' dey got fer pay a man fer do um? W'en de wedder t'un cole, ain' dem got fer buy warm cubbrin fer yo' bed, fer mek yo' warm? An' ain' dey got fer pay rent fer de house unner de sleep een? An' more-sumober, gal, w'en yo' git out er wuk, ain' dem got fer buy bittle fer put een yo' mout'? Answer me dat?' Him got ter say 'yes' ter ebryt'ing I ax um, so den I say, 'Een de ole time all yo' got fer do is lib, dis lib. Maussa him been ten' ter ebryt'ing else; him eben been 'gage de preacher and pay um fer come tell we'all de wud ob God. No c'lection plate eben, in dem days, nuttin' fer we put we money een, we ain' got none fer put, das de trut'; we ain' got no money an' we ain' need ob none. Maussa himself supply we want, and all we nigger haffer do, is do wah him tell we fer do.'

“Dat gal, him ain' sati'fy yet; him continner ter say 'Me glad me ain' born in dat day. Enty

yo' maussa been hab Driber? An' enty him been half kill de po' nigger wid de lash? Den w'en he so weak wid de huttin', enty him been sen' um back fer do he tas'?"

"I ketch my bre't an' I tell um 'No, gal!' Den t'inkin 'pun wah him is say I lose my pashen wid him completely, an' I say: 'Gal, is you a plum fool? Is you t'ink Maussa gwine kill he hoss? 'E is de same t'ing. Is you t'ink Maussa gwine kill he mule? 'E is de same t'ing. Is you t'ink he gwine kill 'e cow, an' 'e hog? 'E is de same t'ing. Is you t'ink Maussa gwine pay he t'ousan' dollar fer nigger, an' gwine let he Driber lash um ter death? I ax you dat, Gal, is you?"

"'No sah, dat is plum foolishness; we is him property wah he buy, an' he own sense tell um fer tek care ob we.'

"W'en I stop talk, de gal been hang he head, so's I can't see he face, an' I t'ink say I is conwince um. Den, my Missis, I tell um fer gullong and dat um ain' fer bodder me no mo'. I ain' wan' fer heaten up wid no argumen'; I is come yah fer wuk an' dat is wah I wan' do.

"My Missis, yo' better sen' dat gal away, mam; him ain' got no sense atall, 'scusin de wud mam, but him is a plum-fool!"

Observing that the old man was much worked up over the situation, I assured him that she would never interfere with him again, and going from the room, I closed the door after me so that this loyal defender of slavery, as he knew it, could be undisturbed and could devote his time to the work in hand.

Hidden in the kitchen I found Annie, the disturber of Daddy Sanders's peace. She was shaking with laughter and when I reproached her for worrying the old man, she said: "I just couldn't help it, Mam, he tek me so ser'ous."

GUNNERMAN SHO KIN LIE

Daddy Tommy from his boyhood had served the family to which he belonged, with faithfulness and devotion. In the old plantation days he had been trained to acquire skill as a "Driver," and in that capacity, mounted on his rough horse, equipped with horn and long whip, which he was skilled in cracking at the pack of hounds baying at his horse's heels, he accompanied his master on every hunting expedition.

When the hunters composing the party had been placed on their "stands," it was the driver's delightful duty to ride where he knew the deer were likely to congregate, and setting the dogs upon them to frighten them from their place of hiding and then to see that in their flight they took a course leading them past the stands where the hunters were concealed and in so doing to give each man, if possible, the chance of a shot at these shy, wild creatures of the forest.

The position was one of great honor on the plantation, and he who held it was likely to be envied by all the other servants.

Years after freedom, and when emancipation had become an old story, "Young Maussa" had grown up to manhood, not on the old plantation

but in a nearby city, and he viewed a visit, with its accompanying hunt, at the home of his fathers, as the most complete joy possible in life.

“Daddy Tommy,” now white-headed, but still full of enthusiastic love for the sport, and as true of heart as of old, would send a message to “Young Maussa” when he considered the chances particularly good for deer killing, and with this message came always an invitation which said: “Baig Maussa fo’ come, an’ tell um fer fetch wid um some dem turrer genemun from town wah is he frien’ so’s me an him kin larn um how fer shoot de deer. Tell Maussa I got chicken de fatten een de hen house—ferrum, an’ I got plenty rice an’ t’ing fo’ he eat. Tell um I got wife fo’ cook ’e bittle ferrum, an’ boy fo’ wait ’pun de table and bresh de fly wah bodder him an’ he frien’.

“Tell um fo’ hurry up an’ come quick ter Bonneau depot, an’ he gwine meet me dere wid de mule an’ de ca’at whatsomebber day him say him comin’, him an’ ’e cump’ny.”

On receipt of this hospitable message, “Young Maussa,” with the urge of the country upon him, would summon his delighted friends, and the party of hunters arriving at “Bonneau depot”

would find awaiting them, their expectant host "Daddy Tommy," sitting in his dilapidated old wagon, holding in—very unnecessarily—his patient, lazy old mule.

No welcome could have exceeded in warmth and genuineness that of the excited old man, who fairly trembled in his eagerness to play properly the role of host, to this representative of all that stood to him for the great and good in life, "my old Maussa's own grandson!"

"Young Maussa" was an adept in telling hunting stories—regular Gunnerman's fairy tales, which had come down in the annals of the family, and so clever was his way of narrating them, that it was difficult for his listeners to know whether he intended them to be believed or not. On this occasion he had as his guest a Northern man, and knowing his unfamiliarity with the subject in hand, he was tempted into an excess of exaggeration, encouraged also by his politeness as a listener, which led him to believe that such politeness must be the child of great credulity. So receptive seemed the guest's attitude of mind that he told the story of an occasion when he had shot a deer through its hind foot and the shot, passing through its body, had come out in front of its victim's head,

killing it on the spot. Reason rebelled at this statement, too exaggerated for even the polite credulity of the guest to pretend to believe, and he said "Pardon me, but that does not seem a possibility. Was there any one there when it happened? Had you an eye-witness to such a remarkable occurrence?"

"Yes" answered mine host. "Tommy here, was with me. Tell him about it, Daddy Tommy, tell the gentleman you saw it."

The old man answered, "Yes sah, I sw'a' dat's de trut'. I is shum wid my own two eye. I bin wid Maussa, and I see dat deer pitch ober and I shum fall down dead. W'en we gone fo' look 'pun um, we bin see dem shot all dedday in de front ob he head. Yes sah, dat's de trut', I tell yer."

"All right, old man" said the guest, "but please explain to me how it was possible for such a thing to have happened."

At this request the old Driver scratched his head as though searching for inspiration, but his pause was only for a moment, and then with wonderful ingenuity and fine loyalty, he explained the inexplicable.

"'E been a dis way, sah, yes sah, I kin 'splain um easy. Yo' see, Boss, dat deer been a punish

wid de miskeeter bite um, coz him bin a lib een de swamp and das weh de skeeter lib and breed. W'en dat deer been a run and him git ter de stan' weh Maussa dem been a hide from um, dat miskeeter bite been a eetch him bad 'hine 'e yeas; 'e bin eetch um so boddersome dat he been seddown fo' scratch um, an' he ain' notice Maussa dem been a hide een de bush, dat deer is ac' heself secca like a cat, him tek he hine feet an' he lif' um up, and wid dat hine feet he scratch eeself 'hine 'e yeas, secca like him been a cat. W'ile him been a do dat, my Maussa him lif' 'e gun, an' tek 'e aim, de gun go bang, an' de shot him gone right t'rou' dat deer hine feet wah him de scratch de biteness wid, an' right t'rou' dat animule head, an' de shot come right spang out t'rou' de deer forehead, secca like him been a windows fo' de shot go t'rou' an' so, Boss, dat is de mek him cumso dat my Maussa is a been kill dat deer dat-a-way like him been a tell yo' he is do."

Having proved his loyalty as well as his marvellous ingenuity, and therefore having honorably acquitted himself according to his primitive code, the old man, with his red pocket handkerchief, mopped his forehead, wiping the

drops caused by his mental effort from his perspiring brow.

Later in the day, when alone with Daddy Tommy, the adored "Young Maussa" said to him: "Daddy Tommy, you sure are a champion liar, and you stood by me well today when I told my Gunnerman story; that was a fine idea of yours about the deer scratching behind his ear with his hind foot, like a cat. How did you happen to think of it?"

"How, Maussa, enty yo' tell me I got fo' do um? Enty yo' tell me fo' say 'e is de trut'? Enty sarbent got fo' do wah 'e maussa tell um fo' do? But, Maussa, lemme baig yo' de nex' time yo' go fo' tell dat 'sperence,—please, my Maussa,—please sah, place dem paa't de deer body closer tergedder, sah. Yo' sarbent haffer t'ink mighty quick fo' mek de deer hine feet de come close de deer head, w'en God A'mighty hissself ain' mek um dat-a-way. Yes sah, Maussa, da Gunnerman story sho laa'n me fo' t'ink quick."

PASTOR CAESAR GILYAD DISCOURSES OF THE HEREAFTER

The little white-washed church beside the road, where the negroes of the primitive country neighborhood assembled regularly every Sunday night for worship, was crowded on this particular Sunday, and the brown, earnest, questioning faces of the negroes were upturned to the small pine pulpit, from which their pastor, the Reverend Caesar Gilyad, who, as he expressed it, "pastured" this flock, was expounding to them, as best he knew how, the conditions they might expect to meet with in the Hereafter.

"My *Bredren*" he said, "My *Bredren*, wah is it you t'ink say, dat Hell is gwine ter be, when yo' *gits* dere? Wah kine an' condition ob place you t'ink he is gwine ter be? You ain' know? Well den, I goffer tell unner *wah* he is. Ha'ken to me, sinners, fo' I is about ter rebel ter unner de *true* state ob de case.

"An' *moresomober*, w'en I git t'rou', you is gwine see dat you is better so order yo' conduc' een dis life, dat dere ain' no chance *atall* ob yo' gittin dere een de *life ter come*.

"*Hell*, my *Bredren*, stan' like-a dis—



“Unner all is know how de *eenside* ob a aig is look? Unner all is know he is roun’? All right. Unner all know he is slip’ry? All right. Den unner know, if anyt’ing git *een* um, dat t’ing can’t by all he tryin’, manage fer crawl *out* ob um; ebry time he try, ’e foot slip back ag’in.

“Well, my *Bredren*, de walls ob Hell is dis like dat *aig*, he is roun’ an’ he yiz *slip’ry*. An’ een de bottom is de *bottomless* pit, an’ een de *bottom* ob de *bottomless* pit bu’n de fire, wah yiz nebber *extinguish*, by *daytime* or by *night* time.

“Dat fire ain’ mek up wid ’ood, my Bredder! Dat fire is ketch up wid de *body* ob de *sinner*; him is de *fuel* wah is mek de flame wah is *rise* up. Dis bein’ de case, I is soun’ de warnin’, I tell unner fer *tek ca’!*

“More dan dat—unner know how de beas’ wid *horn* de stan’?

“Unner is know how de *ox* is stan’? Unner is know how de *Billy-goat* is stan’?

“All right, den; lemme tell unner *dis* t’ing, dat same way is de *debbil* chile de stan’. Him stan’ secka like de *debbil heself*.

“Dat horn gwine stan’ out een *ebry* ’rection, ’e yiz!

“Some ter de eas’ an’ some ter de wes’!

“Some de debil’ chillun gwine hab *one* horn and some gwine hab *two*, an’ some gwine hab *six*. Yes, my Bredder, some gwine hab *SIX!* Wah you is t’ink ob dat?

“Knowin’ *all dese* t’ing ter be true, I is aswise de member ob dis flock wah I is pasture, fo’ be *monst’us careful* how *dey* ees ac’. Put all de money yo’ kin spare, eben ef he *hut* you ter do so, een de c’lection plate, dat is wah I cha’ge unner fer do on de Sabbat’ day. But w’en Monday come, dis yo’ fer do. Tell de trut’ *whensomebber* unner kin see yo’ way *clear* ter do so.

“An’ don’t teef *nuttin* wah ain’t *b’longs* ter yo’, ’cep he yiz *bittle*, dat you is *bleeged* fer hab, wedder he is *tek um*, or *no tek um*.

“Don’t inwite none ob yer Bredder wife fer go ’way wid yo’. If unner is do dat, unner is likely fer go ter hell *berry quick*, an’ dat by de *razor route*.

“Now I done gib unner de rebelation ob hell, an’ nex’ I is gwine ’splain ter unner consarnin’ de *heabenly home*.

Hackey, *ebrybody* in dis congregation, wah I gwine tell unner.

“Tu’n yo’ yea’s dis-a-way, so yo’ ain’ miss *nuttin*. I wan’ yo’ fer yeddy *ebry wud I gwine* utter.

“De Hebbenly mansion is a place wah unner ain’ haffer do *one lick* ob *wuk*, not one *lick*, Sah! Him street is gol’, an’ him tree is bear de leaf wah is nuttin’ but de *diamon’* an’ de *precious stone*, de *sapphy*, de *turkus*, (I ain’ nebber look ’pun dat las’ kine myself as yet.) an’ de gate whereof is mek ob de *solid pearl*.

“An’ ag’in I tell unto you, my Bredren, dat w’en unner git dere unner ain’ haffer do *one lick ob wuk!* Dat is please you, enty?

“An’ moresomober, I hear dem say dat unner ain’ eben haffer *feed* unner self, unner dis *open yo’ mout’* an’ de angul come flying on ’e wing, fer put de bittle eenside ob um, an’ all you gwine haffer do is ter *swaller*. T’ink ob dat, my Bredder! Nuttin’ fo’ do but swaller de *milk* an’ de *honey* wah de angul *fetch fo’* unner! Dat please yo’, enty?

“Wah is dat I yeddy somebody da ax me? *Speak* um out, Sister, don’t ’shame ter ’terrogate de Preacher. You ax me ‘Who is *milk* de cow? An’ who is ’ten de bee?’

“Oh, gullong wid yo’ foolishness, Sister! Wah mek yo’ can’ le’ de *King ob all* do ’e *own* housekeepin’?”

“Enty I yeddy annoder v’ice? Wah *him* want? Sambo, you wa’ know wah kine ob a *coat* you gwine fine up dere fer fit ober de *wing* you gwine *grow*? Do, man! I ain’ tek de *pashuns* fer answer *dat* ’terrogation; ’e ain’ *wut* it. Wah I say ter unner is dis: ’Stid o’ consarn yo’sef ’bout de *kine* of coat unner gwine hab, fer fit ober de *wing* yo’ gwine git, I advise unner fo’ bodder yo’ head about wah kine of a *hat* yo’ gwine fine dere fer fit ober dem *horn* you gwine ter fine yo’sef fitted out wid. *Das* wah yo’ better t’ink pun, lessen yo’ men’ yo’ ways w’ile dere is *still de time*.

“Ef all de questin’ done ax, we will conclude dis sarbice wid de *passin’ ob de plate*. See dat he is *pile high wid de money*. Gib ’till ’e hu’t yo’; fo’ he who pastures unner, de *Shepherd* ob *dis flock*, is ’bleeged ter lib *hones*’. An’ it *sho* tek a *heap o’ money fo’ do dat*. Amen, Amen.”

PHINEAS CONNORS—SERVANT

The grayness which comes to a negro's skin when he is ill had come to that of my poor old Connors, and in his case it was a precursor of death, for there was no hope of his recovery, and I, with a heavy heart in my breast, was a constant visitor at his bedside in the hospital to which I had persuaded him to be removed for better care than in his own home.

He was a prince among his own color, and to me he was a faithful and devoted servant who had reigned royally over the dominion of my kitchen, dispensing with unfailing good-humor and generosity fragrant cups of coffee, to every huckster who came inside the yard hoping for a purchaser of his wares. I realized that this indulgence of Connors' proclivities was an extravagance on my part, and yet I got so much in return for it and for refraining from curbing his hospitable dispensations that I know I was really a gainer in the end.

My memory brings me now his rich, sonorous voice calling out to a passer-by :

“Bredder, how 'e is you ain' been ter chu'ch las' night? You cayn git dere?”

“Well, come een an’ lemme tell yo’ wah de preacher binna talk ’bout, de singin’ binna some-t’in’ gran’, we miss you een de choir. Come on een, Bredder, come on een, Bredder.”

And shortly thereafter the rich, pungent odor of coffee would come to my nostrils, and I realized the delinquent church member was being refreshed at my expense.

In return for many indulgences I won the most sincere and undying devotion of my cook, with enough of admiration to compensate for any lack of it I might encounter elsewhere on my journey through life.

Now my servant was dying, and his great frame had shrunk to almost unbelievable nothingness. Sitting at his bedside I read to him, and repeated his favorite hymns, but he, though enjoying the prayers and the hymns, never once admitted to me that he realized his condition, but would always say to me in a voice which he strove to make convincing:

“Nex’ week, Miss Janie, I gwinea be back in yo’ kitchen, you mus’n’t be ’fraid I ain’a comin’, I knows you can’t git on widout me, I gwinea be dere.”

This reassurance of his to me I could scarcely listen to without tears.

The evening before he died I was with him and said, knowing the end could not be far off:

“Connors, you know I have your watch in my care, and even though you say you’re coming back to me, just in case you should not, what would you like me to do with it? Do you want me to give it to someone?”

At that he smiled, and looking straight into my face said, with broken breath:

“Miss Janie, you ain’t gwine ter hab ter do nuttin’ wid my watch, Missis. I tell you, I’s comin’ back to you, an’ I gwinea wear dat watch myself.”

Hearing his brave words, I took his poor old wasted hand, and looking upon my faithful servant, as I knew for the last time, my heart ached. Next morning they sent from the hospital to tell me that the end had come. Then I knew that Connors’ spirit was where the very best and bravest spirits go after the Death Angel has laid its hands upon the body.

Later I was told that Connors having been fully conscious of his condition, had made a legally perfect will, and that in it he had bequeathed the watch, which was in my keeping, to his adopted son. I also learned that he had entreated his friends as well as his nurses not

to tell me he was going to die, saying that he could not bear to look upon my face after I knew it, as Life had brought me much suffering.

Connors was carried to his grave in a flower decked casket, and many of his white friends were present.

To this day I mourn his absence from my kitchen, and that I will never again see his kind, brown face is a sorrow to me.

Surely where faithful servants are after death Connors' spirit is happy with its kind.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 695 471 0

